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FLASH

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Message from the Minister

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this first edition of FLASH, the newsletter of the ministry's French Language Services Unit.

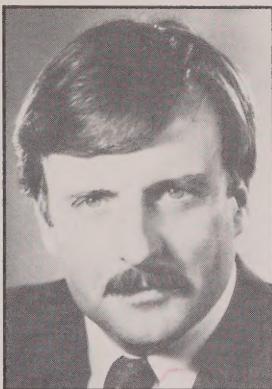
With only six months remaining before implementation of the French Language Services Act, work is proceeding well to ensure the ministry will be ready. You undoubtedly have noticed some of the changes: bilingual signs in public areas, more and more print communications in both languages, French language training opportunities and an increasing number of bilingual staff joining our ranks.

The French Language Services Act is an historic step for the francophone population of Ontario. It recognizes the significant contribution francophones have made to the province's development and it demonstrates the government's commitment to providing them with services in their language.

The Ministry of Correctional Services supports the principles of the Act and is committed to its effective implementation. I am counting on your support and involvement to help us reach our goal of effective service delivery in French in the ministry's designated offices and institutions.

This and subsequent issues of the newsletter will inform you about requirements of the French Language Services Act and how the ministry is preparing itself to meet them. I am confident that this newsletter will be of great value in promoting dialogue and understanding.

The French Language Services Act will provide more equitable, more effective correctional services in Ontario. Let's work together to make it happen.



Newsletter of the
French Language
Services Unit



Ministry of
Correctional
Services
Ontario

Implementation of FLS Act moves ahead

In September 1988, the French language services unit completed the ministry's implementation plan. The plan was approved by the Ontario French Language Services Commission in March this year.

Throughout the ministry, 506 positions have been identified as requiring French language skills. Thirty-three probation/parole offices, 10 institutions and two regional offices, the ministry's main and corporate offices and the Ontario Board of Parole will have designated French language positions. Designated positions represent six per cent of the ministry's total work force.

French language training has been offered to help staff meet the language requirements of designated positions and to assist with career development. Since the initiative began, over 300 staff members have participated in training programs.

As part of the government's bilingual visual identity policy, the ministry has taken steps to ensure that indoor and outdoor signs at designated offices and institutions are bilingual by November 1989. Most of the ministry's forms are now available in French. All forms will either be bilingual or be available in French by the time the Act takes force.

The ministry is currently negotiating the implementation of French language services within its community service agencies. A province-wide implementation plan for community service agencies will be submitted for approval to the Ontario French Language Services Commission within the next few months.

A communications plan has been developed to help employees understand the nature, intent and impact of the legislation. Other communications activities are planned to inform clients and members of the public about the Act and the availability of French language services within the ministry.

Printed material intended for the public, such as the annual report, pamphlets and brochures, are now issued in a bilingual format as a matter of course. Several exhibits and video programs are also available in French from the communications branch.

Since the Act was passed, much has been accomplished to increase the quantity and quality of French language services in the ministry. Much remains to be done. It will take a sustained effort and high level of commitment to meet the objectives on target.

The Honourable David Ramsay
Minister of Correctional Services

The FLS Act at a glance

Bill 8 was introduced in the Legislature on May 1, 1986, to provide for French language services in the government of Ontario. It was passed unanimously later that year on November 18, 1986, and given the short title of French Language Services Act, 1986 (FLS Act).

The French Language Services Act comes into force on November 19, 1989, after which all services offered by government agencies must be available in French in designated areas. Currently there are 22 such areas, designated because they contain a significant French-speaking population. These are either rural areas where francophones make up at least 10 per cent of the population or urban centres where francophones number at least 5,000.

Under the Act, any person or organization is guaranteed the right to receive all government services in French as well as to communicate with the government of Ontario in French in designated areas of the province.

A service is defined in the Act as "any service or procedure that is provided to the public by a government agency or institution of the Legislature and includes all communications for that purpose." Services are provided through

- . oral communications (telephone, over the counter, counselling, etc.)
- . written communications
- . signs and public notices
- . forms and documents
- . information services
- . hearings

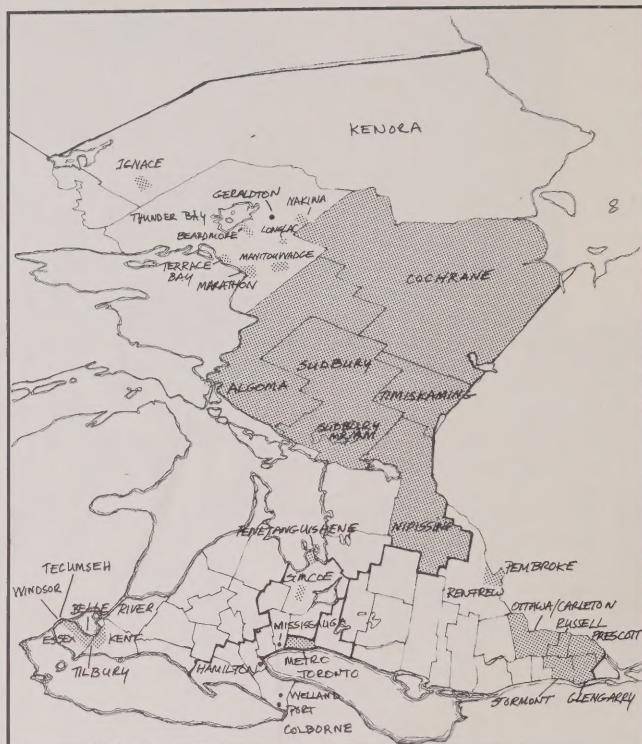
The goal is to ensure that francophones feel at ease dealing with the government in the official language of their choice, and that they enjoy government services equal in quality to those enjoyed by English-speaking citizens.

To provide high quality services and comply with the Act, individual ministries have identified which positions require French language skills in order to serve the public. This process is referred to as designating a position.

A position can be designated only if it is filled by a person having the required language skills or if the position is vacant. Otherwise, the position can only be slated for designation at a later date.

Administration of the French Language Services Act is the responsibility of the Minister of Francophone Affairs. Deputy ministers are responsible to the Executive Council for the implementation of the Act and the quality of French language services in their respective ministries.

The French Language Services Act recognizes the long-standing contribution Franco-Ontarians have made to the province. It is hoped that implementation of the Act will preserve this cultural heritage for future generations.



French Language Services Act, 1986 - Designated areas

If you would like more information on the French Language Services Act, 1986, or its implementation in the ministry, the French Language Services Unit would be pleased to help you.

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